

# **INFORMATIONAL PUBLIC MEETING ON THE USE OF \$400,000 FEDERAL BROWNFIELDS ASSESSMENT GRANT**

## **MEETING MINUTES**

**Wednesday, June 25, 2008**

**3:00 pm**

**RI DEM Headquarters, Room 300**

**235 Promenade Street**

**Providence, RI 02908**

### **Meeting Notes**

**Attendees: See below.**

**(Meeting, run by Cynthia Gianfrancesco of RI DEM, began at 3:10 pm.)**

- **Introductions & explanation of agenda.**
- **Open remarks/presentation by Cynthia Gianfrancesco from RI DEM's Office of Waste Management. Explained the difference between the TBA program she runs on an annual basis and the funding the Department has available through the 2008 Brownfields Assessment competitive grant. Also explained eligibility requirements.**

- **Proposals not accepted for funding under the grant will be held onto by RI DEM and placed into the regular pool for possible TBA future funding.**
- **The money will not be provided directly to successful applicants – rather, RI DEM will use technical assistance contractors (TACs) to perform the site assessments. Once access agreements (see below) are finalized, RI DEM hands off the project (Phase I, II and cleanup planning) to a TAC.**
- **Described the seven eligible communities - Warwick, West Warwick, Cranston, Coventry, Woonsocket, Central Falls and Pawtucket – as outlined in DEM’s application to EPA (Oct. 2007) and Workplan (May 2008), and why we picked these 7 communities again in 2008.**
- **Discussion about the application process – applications accepted through October 15, 2008.**
- **Discussion about how difficult it can be to spend “petroleum only” funding; can be challenging to prove eligibility.**
- **Walked attendees through the TBA application and scoring process. Described the process by which RI DEM will prioritize applications for the Phase I’s, Phase II’s and cleanup plans.**

- Explained the process by which RI DEM will need to obtain “property access agreements from owners.” Applicants do not need to be property owners to be eligible for grant funding.
- Outlined various ways that municipalities can tap into this grant funding - - e.g. in the case of tax delinquent properties or abandoned properties.
- Explained federal funding cycle – DEM expects to have funding available from EPA on or about October 1, 2008.
- Discussion about the application review process and timeline for when successful applicants can expect to see assessments begin.
  - o RI DEM will take October 2008 – Jan, 2009 to review and score applications received by October 15, 2008.
  - o EPA then needs to review applications.
  - o Access agreements need to be completed.
  - o Expect Phase I’s (performed by TAC) during first 2 quarters of 2009.
  - o Expect Phase II fieldwork (performed by TAC) during 3rd & 4th quarter of 2009.
  - o Data is then forwarded to DEM in completed Phase II report.
  - o For those properties going through both a Phase I and Phase II assessment, the estimated completion date for full report will be 1st or 2nd quarter of 2010.

**o Remedial planning phase will begin at this point (if needed).**

- DEM explained the financial and administrative benefits of taking advantage of this assessment opportunity if the property is slated to be sold or taken possession of during the next few years.**

- DEM engaged the attendees in a discussion about the upcoming 2009 brownfields grant process. Explained that DEM was actively seeking Coalition Assessment partners to work with as part of a \$1,000,000 proposal to EPA this fall. DEM expects EPA to open the RFP in early August w/ a 90 day RFP. Discussion about how a Coalition Assessment partnership would work between DEM and 2+ interested communities. We would attempt to allocate at least \$200,000 to each community (if 2 partners), and this funding would be less if more than 2 partners were chosen by DEM. Deadline for applications to DEM to become a coalition partner is July 25, 2008.**

- Meeting attendees were allowed to continue asking questions about the application and assessment process. DEM stressed the importance of having at least a Phase I done if any property owner is considering refinancing in the near future – banks now require Phase I's for refinancing.**

- Discussion about RI DEM's expectations after a Remedial Decision Letter is issued – it was explained that the Department would expect that a Remedial Action Work Plan (RAWP) would be completed. RI**

**DEM expects that the contamination identified by the Phase I & II will be cleaned up within a reasonable timeframe. There is some flexibility built into the process, however.**

- DEM explained other funding sources available to all RI municipalities: state TBA funding; EDC's revolving loan fund, and; applications to EPA for cleanup and assessment funding.**

**Attendees:**

**Geoffrey Marchant**

**Catherine Ady**

**Bret Jedeke**

**David Heislein**

**Eric Axelrod**

**Jim Celenza**

**Gary Leib**

**John Aubin**

**Matt Dowling**

**Stephen McCandless**

**Jay O'Grady**

**Samantha Hogan**

**Brian Kortz**

**John Chambers**

**Ally Dick**

**Chris Hannifan**

**Ramon Martinez**

**Shannon Daigle**

**Cynthia Gianfrancesco**

**Elizabeth Stone**

**Sarah Clark**